4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

581 from fallen nature; but we are not at liberty to record those solitary outbursts of evil passions as an established system or even custom; Hindus might as well regard the disclosures of our divorce-courts as the normal state of European matrimony. Whilst thus vindicating the honor of the married life of the Coorgs, I would not flatter their pride; but rather induce them to render and to maintain their family-hearths pure and honorable withal and to infuse also a better spirit into their public feasts, those popular schools of morality, from which all foul and indecent ribaldry should be banished for ever.

595 *Polygamy* is not prohibited amongst the Coorgs, but it seldom occurs and chiefly in cases, where the first marriage is not blessed with male issue. It also happens, that a young widow is taken to wife by another member of the same house, but this is a voluntary engagement on either part, and the woman loses all claim to her first husband's property, being now the wife of another.

687 567 564 582 The odd expression "*Sirkar wives*" refers to a tyrannical practice of the Rajahs, who, when severely punishing a Coorg house, exterminated all the men and reduced the women to a state of slavery, making them to work on the Sirkar farms or Panyas. Any low caste fellow, who applied for a wife to the Rajah, might then obtain one of these poor creatures, and such marriages may account for the comparatively fair and handsome appearance of many a low caste native of Coorg.

586 [624] *Divorce* on account of unfaithfulness is a recognised institution and solemnly carried out by the Aruvas of the unhappy couple and by the Takkas of the village. The children remain in the father's house, the mother returns with all her belongings to the house of her parents. Should a reconciliation take place, the husband of a restored wife is looked down upon with contempt. No refutation of the alleged "communism of women" could be stronger than these facts.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

officers, both since dismissed from the King's and Company's service, had imagined the British were going to declare war against him, and was consequently fortifying his country; and I supposed the work-people were employed on some strong place in the neighbourhood. Having obtained special permission for myself and companions, I determined that I would immediately undeceive him, as an act of kindness to both parties. 175* 643* 648*

Rising very early on the 25th, we took a quiet walk in the garden, and returning up-stairs, were followed by Mahomed Sahib, the butler, who entreated to speak with me in private, and to request Lieutenant Meredith to remain in the verandah, to prevent any one from listening. This we acquiesced in; and no sooner were we alone in the bed-chamber, than he threw himself at my feet, and entreated me, by the memory of his old master, to save his life. I was perfectly thunderstruck; raised him up, and desired him to explain himself; when he told me a tale which harrowed my soul. The four Bengalees, whom I had left fat and happy, had become dissatisfied with promises, and wages protracted and never paid; they had demanded their dismissal, and had, in consequence, been inhumanly murdered. He himself had [681] applied for leave, and was immediately mulcted of all he had, and his thumbs squeezed in screws, made on purpose, and used in native courts; his body flagellated, and a threat held out, that the next offence would be punished with death. That the Rájah being acknowledged as the God of the country, exercised the supposed right without remorse and without control. That, for instance, if a poor fellow, standing in his presence, with both hands joined in adoration as of the Supreme, incessantly calling out Mahá Swámi! or Great God! should be suddenly bit by a musquito, and loosen his hands to scratch; a sign too well known, would instantly be made by this *soidisant* Deity, and the poor wretch be a head shorter [687]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

*175 *643 *648 ●[687]

in a twinkling. This, he told me, had been the fate of the fine-looking Parsee interpreter, whom I had seen at my last visit, who, having built a house, and amassed some wealth, was beheaded, and his property seized for the state; and this, he also assured me, was the fate of every man who entered the country, if he ever attempted to quit it again: and the Rájah, admitting his troops to a share in the plunder, bound them to his interests by chains of adamant. He entreated me to take him with me out of the country, which, he said could be easily accomplished, because he must accompany me to the barrier; but I could not listen to such a proposal, and at once told him so. To connive at the escape of one of the Rájah's servants, while I was his guest, would have been a direct breach of hospitality, which I could not consent to practice. But learning on some further conversation, that the native officer, under the appearance of an honorary guard was placed there as a spy over every word and action of every gentleman who lived in that palace, I proposed to enter into such conversation with him, in Hindustáni as being reported, might induce the Rájah to grant him leave. He also told me, that the Rájah fearing some attack from the English, was building new forts, and repairing all the old ones, and then retired, I believe, unobserved. The signal being made for breakfast, we sat down, attended as usual. I entered into conversation with Mahomed Sahib, talked of his mistress now at Madras, and his late master's will, and asked him if he had received the thousand pagoda legacy his master had left him. He replied, it was the first he had heard of it. I had, however, actually heard something of the kind, and advised him to get four months' leave of absence, to go and see his old mistress, before she embarked for England. He told me, he certainly should like to go and see her, but he could not bear to leave so good, so kind a master as the Mahá Swámi; to which I replied, that I was sure the Rájah

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

had some ambition to shine as a poet. Some of his pieces, addressed to one of his wives, are still preserved. They have no merit, and were perhaps made for him. However, he may have been a Nero in a small way. Cruelty seems to have been his sport. He liked to kill his victims with his own hand, with gun, bow or knife. For small offences people had their ears cropped, their noses cut, or their tongues clipped. For an impertinent answer men or women had their mouths rinsed, that was the phrase, i. e. their lips were cut off all round their mouths, and they were left to perish without food or drink. Others were thrown down a precipice on the hill side, near the "Rájah's seat" in Mercara. Many seem to have been destroyed merely for the purpose of confiscating their property, for Lingarája had as great a passion for gold as for blood.

During the first years of his reign he was restrained from giving full vent to his atrocious propensities by the influence of his Devan, Kshauryakere Appanna, who seems to have been a man of character and independence, bold enough to lecture the tyrant whom he had placed on the throne in preference to the rule of a stranger, the Rájah of Sóde. But by degrees Lingarája became impatient of the control of a subject. Appanna, relying on the Rájah's gratitude, continued to exhort, to warn and, at times, to resist his master. He had mistaken his man. One day the Devan was seized and carried before the Rájah. He was charged with treason. He knew, that he was doomed. The Rájah himself conducted the investigation. "Confess your guilt," he cried. "I am guilty indeed," replied the intrepid minister, "of one crime, of having made a wretch like you, Rájah of Coorg." Lingarája was mad with rage. Appanna, with several other so called accomplices, was carried out into the jungle to a distance of some miles. There they were nailed to some large trees, the Rájah feasting his eyes on the torments of his help-

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

less victims, who died with curses on their lips. A large number of people, the families, relations and friends of the condemned men, were slaughtered on the occasion. Some say, that the Devan had entered into a conspiracy against the Rájah's life, and that on a hunting excursion a shot, aimed at Lingarája, passed close by him, whereupon he seized the traitors and exterminated them and their party; but this may only be an invention of the Rájah, calculated to throw a veil over a crime of a dye too dark even for Coorg. In 1820 the miserable tyrant died. He believed that he was destroyed through magic arts and demoniac influences employed by secret enemies. He had held possession of Coorg for eleven long years. The complete ignorance of his subjects, whom he managed to isolate entirely from the surrounding countries, subject to the East India Company, combined with the terror of his arm, kept up by frequent executions, and a system of treacherous espionage, fostered by the Rájah among his terrified slaves, laid the Coorgs prostrate at the feet of their rapacious and blood-thirsty master. He died forty-five years of age amidst the gloom of dread superstitions. His queen, who preferred death to the fate which, she thought, awaited her from the hatred of the young Rájah, swallowed diamond powder, and was buried with Lingarája in a splendid sepulchre near the tomb of Vírarájendra.

3. Lingarája's character.

Of Lingarája's personal character, Lieut. Connor who made his acquaintance gives us the following graphic picture:—

"The late Chief, anxious to prevent his brothers from acquiring any influence, retained them in a species of exile; Appáji Sáib, the elder, is represented as having been of a violent temper and impatient of control; this turbulent spirit hurried him to a premature end, and Lingarája had nearly shared the same fate, but seems to have owed his safety to

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

692 Panchâyat lay to the Párapatingár or to the Devân's Kacheri. The Párapatiagár settled at his own responsibility or through a Panchâyat cases of small amount which, however, remained undefined.

685 When *theft* was committed in a village, the Gauda with the ryots exerted themselves to catch the thief and on apprehension carried him to the Párapatiagár's Kacheri, where an enquiry was made, the stolen property, if possible, recovered and restored to the owner with an award of half the value of the stolen property as a punishment of the thief. In default 681 of payment, he was flogged or sentenced to work on the roads. 565 *Corporal punishment* was not restricted to any class of crime or people; even Devâns, who had incurred the displeasure of the Rájahs, were subjected to the last, some times swung by the royal hand!

682 In *murder cases*, the Párapatiagárs and the Subadár of the district committed the criminal for trial to the Huzur, the 692 officials of which, under orders from the Rájah, examined the prisoner and reported the result. According to circumstances the murderer would be pardoned, fined, whipped, mutilated 684 or executed, agreeably to the Rájah's orders. In *cases of adultery* the guilty parties were severely and barbarously punished. *Manslaughter* committed in a state of intoxication 682 or during hunting or whilst guarding the crops against wild beasts, was leniently dealt with, especially if the unfortunate man reported the accident voluntarily before the Huzur had 684 been informed of it. *Eloping from the country* and *treasonable* 689 *acts against the Sirkar* were considered as the most heinous crimes, and the culprit, if caught, seldom escaped capital 696 punishment, dictated with a savage vindictiveness. Of the nature of these punishments it is difficult to credit the stories, that are told of their frequency and ferocity. The ordinary ones are said to have been: crushing to death by elephants, strangulation or decapitation by the large Coorg knife, a most